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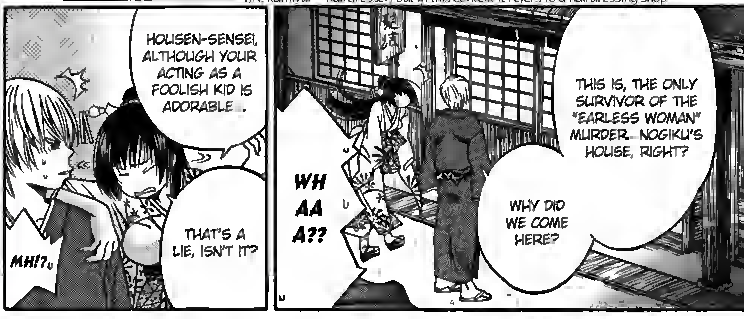
Chapter 3 - Riddle of the Reaved Ear

T/N: kamiyui = hairdresser, but in this context it refers to a hairdressing shop


HOUSEN-SENSEI, ALTHOUGH YOUR ACTING AS A FOOLISH KID IS ADORABLE...
THAT'S A LIE, ISN'T IT?
MH!?
WHAAA??
THIS IS, THE ONLY SURVIVOR OF THE "EARLESS WOMAN" MURDER... NOGIKU'S HOUSE, RIGHT?
WHY DID WE COME HERE?

"THE EAR IS POSSESSED BY THE EARLESS HOUICHI."
SAID KAGARI, RIGHT?
AH
IF SHE SAID THAT THERE WERE A LOT OF EARLESS PEOPLE, THE TOPIC WOULD BE DIFFERENT THOUGH.

SO THE "EARLESS HOUICHI" POINTS TO THE ONLY PERSON WHO LIVES AFTER HER EAR WAS CUT, NOGIKU...?
HUH?
BUT, THAT WOULD BE...
THAT PITIFUL NOGIKU.
WHAT'S WRONG WITH HER?
THE EAR IS...
SNIFF
EXCUSE US
WHAT MIGHT BE YOUR BUSINESS WITH THIS POOR HAIRDRESSER...?
IT STINKS
!

THIS WOMAN IS...
"THUMP"
NOGIKU
!
THE BLOOD IS STILL OOZING OUT...
MORE THAN TEN DAYS SHOULD'VE PASSED BY NOW
IT'S BLEEDING FROM THE UNCONTAINED RESENTMENT OF HER EAR BEING SNATCHED AWAY...
OU'VE GOT IT WRONG, SENSE!
THE BLOOD IS SURGING OUT FROM THE REAVED EAR.

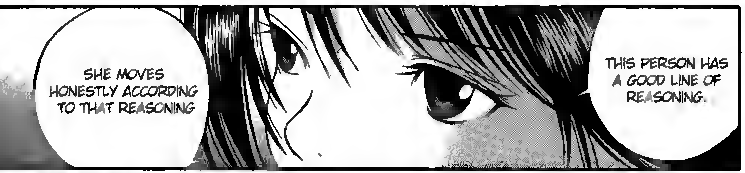
'PARDON MY INTRUSION'
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? THIS PERSON, FROM LOSING HER EAR...
UMM ...
THIS FELLOW IS THE SHUNGA MASTER, HOUSEN-SENSEI.
I'M TSUBAKI OF ATEYA.
LIFUFU. GOOD EVENING, NOGIKU-SAN.
MY JOB IS TO LOOK FOR MISSING THINGS.
I WON'T TAKE LONG.
GIVEN THAT,
YOU'D PEACEFULLY RETURN ETSU'S EAR OVER THERE.

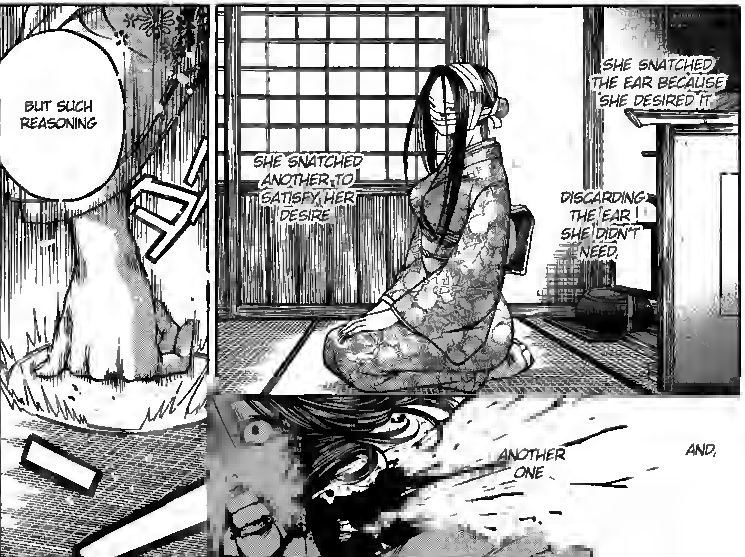
D-
DUM-
BASS
SSS!!!
I'M SORRY! SHE'S JUST A FREAK. SHE'S A BIT DRUNK, SO...
Apologize!
I'M NOT DRUNK!
DO YOU REALIZE WHAT YOU'VE DONE!? YOU'VE JUST ACCUSED HER OF MURDER!!
I'M NOT MISTAKEN!!
HOW COULD YOU DECLARE SUCH-
IF YOU SEE THE TRUTH AS A "REALITY", WILL YOU UNDERSTAND IT?

THE EAR.
I WON'T HAND IT OVER.
MH!
Y-
SHE
YOU
HAS IT!?
IN THERE!?
ゾワ
SAYING SUCH THING BLUNTLY.
THIS WOMAN...
DOES SHE KNOW HOW GRAVE THIS MATTER IS?
FROM THE BEGINNING THIS PERSON HASN'T CONCEALED ANYTHING
ﾆﾔﾘ

IN REALITY, THREE OF THE VICTIMS HAVE BEEN KILLED.
THE CULPRIT WOULD'VE SNATCHED THE EAR AFTER SHE KILLED THE VICTIM, RIGHT?
UNLESS THE CULPRIT HAD QUITE OF A SWORD SKILL
NO MATTER HOW YOU LOOK AT IT, IT'S SUSPICIOUS.
The procedure is different
AND YET, FOR SOMEONE TO LIVE DESPITE HER EAR BEING SEVERED.
THERE SHE GOES
IS THAT SO .?
From just 3 sheets of Kawara-ban she could make it out this far.
SO THE PERSON HERSELF IS LIKE THIS, HUH?

BEWILDERED BY THE PITIFUL NOGIKU,
THE TRUTH BECOMES HAZY TO EVERYONE
ALTHOUGH IT EXISTS INSIDE HER VERY BANDAGE.


THIS PERSON HAS A GOOD LINE OF REASONING.
SHE MOVES HONESTLY ACCORDING TO THAT REASONING


SHE SNATCHED THE EAR BECAUSE SHE DESIRED IT.
DISCARDING THE EAR I SHE DIDN'T NEED.
SHE SNATCHED ANOTHER TO SATISFY HER DESIRE
BUT SUCH REASONING
AND,
ANOTHER ONE

CAN'T BE APPLIED TO PEOPLE.
Why did she go to that extent
for the "ear"?
hmph
.....
MEN FALL IN LOVE BY THEIR EYES
WOMEN FALL IN LOVE BY THEIR EARS.
HUH?

A JOKE OF THE KABUKI ACTORS.
RURIMARU-SAMA !!
I'M COUNTING ON YOU AGAIN TODAY, NOGIKU
YE-
YES
RURI-MARU-SAMA
AH
THE BAD HABIT OF A HAIR-DRESSER
YOUR OWN HAIR IS SO UNPOLISHED, EH?

NN
RURIMARU-SAMA
RURIMARU-SAMA
!
THIS IS.
VERY REGRETT-ABLE
OH?
My unsightly birthmark.

IT HAPPENS SOMETIMES
DUE TO A DIFFICULT DELIVERY
OR EVEN WHILE IN FETUS
AREN'T YOU SKILLFUL? FUFU
Left alone by my father due to my mother's death.
IT'S TICKLISH
And now, it happens again due to this accursed ear...
RURI-MARU...
RURI-MARU-SAMA...
I WANT THAT WHITE EAR!!
WANT

YOUR EAR
YOUR EAR
"KRSH"
"KRSH"
"KRSH"
"KRSH"
"KRSH"
HAND OVER YOUR EAR!!

THIS EAR IS MINE
AFTER THE WOUND IS HEALED
TO RURIMARU-SAMA'S SIDE, I'LL...

U-
UW AA AA A!!
A... GAIN.
THE EAR IS...!!

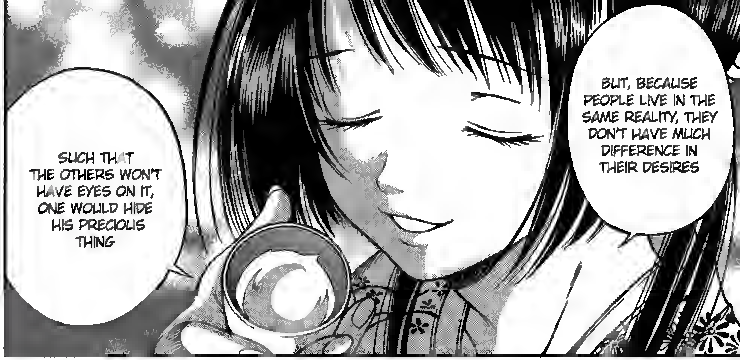
ATTACHING A DEAD FLESH TO ONE'S BODY
IS A VERY VERY DIFFICULT THING TO DO.
NOT TO MENTION, IT'S ANOTHER PERSON'S FLESH.

LET'S GO, SENSEI
BUT..
HUH?
AA
AAA
AA
THIS PERSON ...
Will seek another ear.
DO YOU THINK SUCH A MUMMY WILL STINK THIS MUCH?
SHE WON'T KILL ANYMORE
THEN WHAT IS THIS ROTTEN SMELL?

They are fragile.

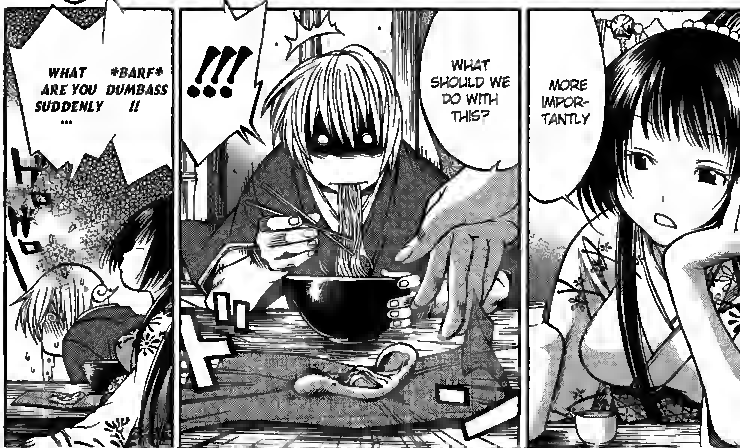
NOGIKU WAS BURIED WITH NO ONE TO TEND HER GRAVE

T/N: Tenpura >> deep-fried fish and vegetables in a light batter


BUT, BECAUSE PEOPLE LIVE IN THE SAME REALITY, THEY DON'T HAVE MUCH DIFFERENCE IN THEIR DESIRES
SUCH THAT THE OTHERS WON'T HAVE EYES ON IT, ONE WOULD HIDE HIS PRECIOUS THING

Tsubaki, who promptly arrives at the truth,
is more impressed
with some deep affairs than with me now

WELL, BESIDES THE TENPURA. .
I SHOULD ALSO GIVE HER A PRAISE, RIGHT...?
UMM .


MORE IMPOR-TANTLY
WHAT SHOULD WE DO WITH THIS?
!!!
WHAT ARE YOU SUDDENLY ...
BARF DUMBASS !!

I forgot it
ETSU WAS FROM A WEALTHY FAMILY, RIGHT?
WE COULD RECEIVE A LARGE REWARD...
We should quickly return the ear to Etsu's parents
YOU MONEY GRUBBER
THANK YOU
It's Etsu
MY EAR
THANK YOU, THANK YOU
THE PRECIOUS EAR FROM WHICH I HEAR VOICES
A ghost

IF EVERYTHING IS SUDDENLY SNATCHED AWAY, STRONG EMOTIONS WILL REMAIN
I WONDER IF THE SAME GOES TO NOGIKU...
ETSU
BECAUSE OF YOU, I COULD DRAW A VERY BEAUTIFUL PAINTING
THANKS
SENSEI
IN JUST A SHORT TIME I DIDN'T MEET YOU, YOU'VE BECOME A GREAT GUY
I'M NO MATCH FOR YOUR LOVER, YOU KNOW!
FUFU
I'LL VISIT YOU NOW
RURIMARU-SAMA ♡

SHE DISAP-PEARED ...
THAT SURPRISED ME
YEAH, WE SHOULD MAKE SURE THE EAR REACH HER PARENT PROPERLY-
No, no
NOT THAT ONE. IT'S YOU, HOUSEN-SENSEI!!
WHAT CAME OUT FROM THAT MISERLY LIPS
WAS A VERY GENTLE, SUBTLE LINE
WEREN'T YOU BAD WITH WOMAN?
Something like a ghost all of a sudden
!
True.
This very me--
HEH
HEH HEH
It can't be helped. I've come to understand it at last
?
WHY ARE YOU LAUGHING?

WOMEN ARE LIVING THEIR LIVES WITH ALL THEY'VE GOT, AREN'T THEY?
SENSEI, YOU DIDN'T EVEN KNOW ABOUT THAT?
YOU STILL HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO!
SHUT UP!
Just for a bit.
aren't they lovely?
Women that is.
UNEXPECTEDLY YOU'RE NOT AFRAID OF GHOST, HUH? SENSEI
WHEN YOU MENTION THAT

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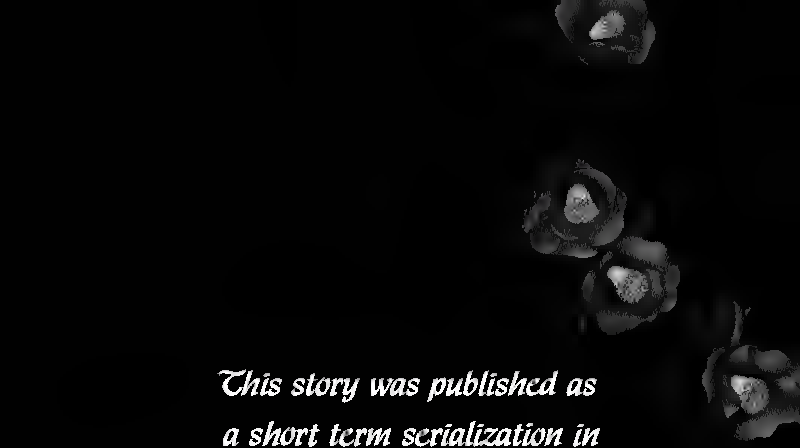

This story was published as a short term serialization in Young Animal. Since it received great popularity with the readers, the story from the next pages will be a new beginning to this tale as a series. Now, finally the real world of "Tsubaki of Atcya" is starting.